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J. Anderson.

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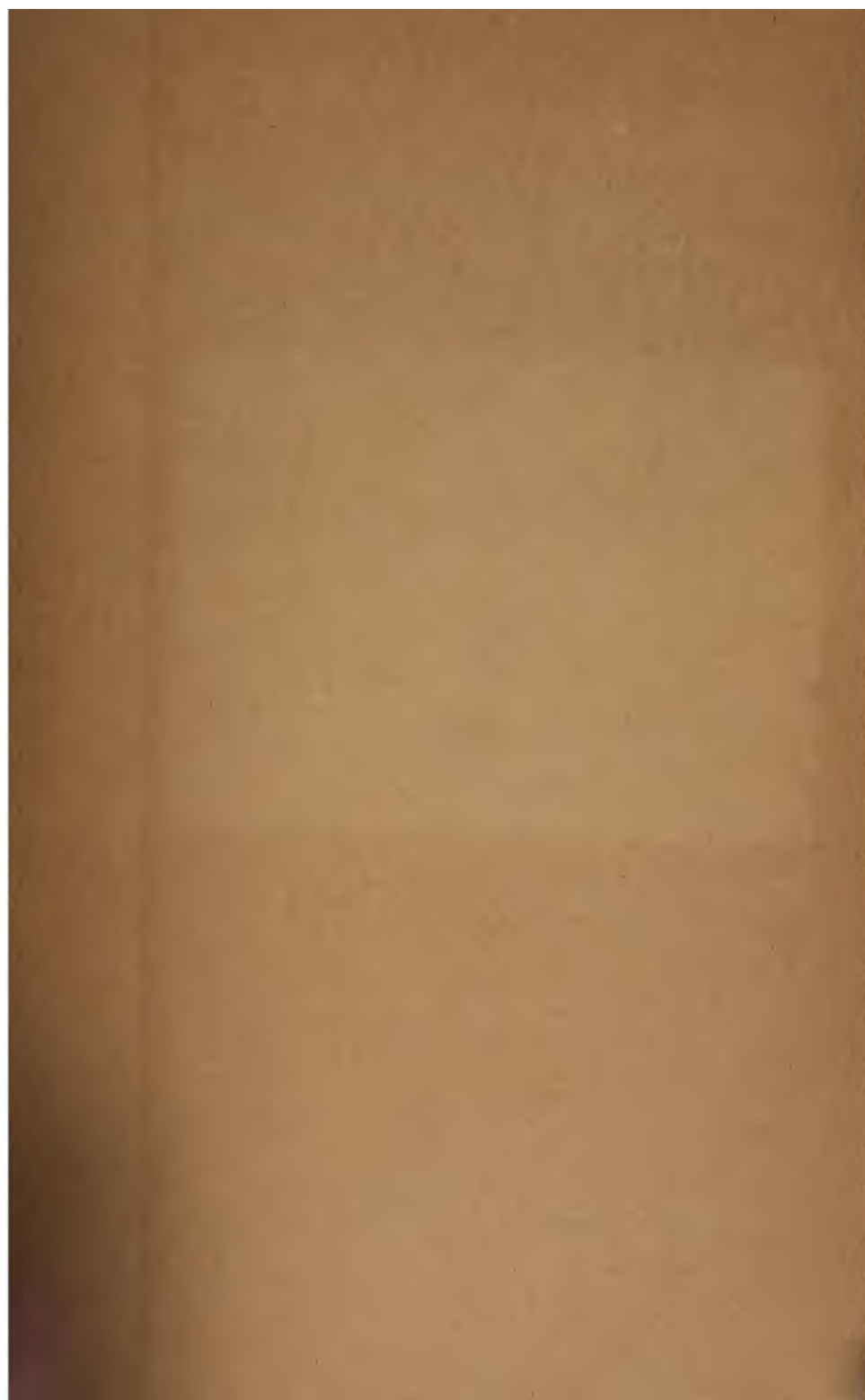
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# ADDRESS

ON RETIRING FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL CHAIR

OF THE

New York Academy of Medicine,

BY

JAMES ANDERSON, M.D.,  
/

DELIVERED JANUARY 16, 1867.

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NEW YORK:

New York:  
PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE COUNCIL.  
1869.

TO THE FELLOWS OF THE ACADEMY.



This Address has been rewritten, and is published with special reference to the position of the Academy, both as to what it has done and what it HAS YET to do in regard to a HOME.

I respectfully ask every Fellow to read it, with his mind fixed on the topics presented for action and accomplishment.

Yours truly,  
J. B. B.

N5A6  
1869

## VALEDICTORY ADDRESS.

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*Fellows of the New York Academy of Medicine :*

GENTLEMEN—In taking a final leave of the chair I have had the honor to occupy during the last six years, permit me to solicit your attention while I present to you, in a very brief manner, a summary of the origin, rise, and progress of the Academy.

The medical profession suffered for many years from the want of an organization adapted to promote social harmony and scientific culture. This want, strongly felt, was the topic of frequent conversation, until, at the fourth anniversary dinner of "The Society for the Relief of Widows and Orphans of Medical Men," celebrated November 18, 1846, at 579 Broadway, it resulted in a movement for, and the final organization of "The New York Academy of Medicine."

The first record we have of any action tending toward the formation of this body is found in the *Annalist*, (vol. 1, page 111), in which it is stated, that at the above dinner, Doctor Alex. H. Stevens, in responding to a sentiment given by Doctor Valentine Mott, "The College of Physicians and Surgeons" said, "he congratulated the profession



on the large assemblage upon an occasion of this kind; that it was the initial step toward an *esprit de corps* in the profession of this city, which was the *sine qua non*, without which it could not sustain its dignity and command respect."

"Instead of being anatomists of each other, the *disjecta membra* of the profession, they would be brought together, and become a body corporate."

A sentiment of like spirit was entertained and expressed by Doctor John Watson, in responding to the fifth toast, "The National Medical Institution," in which he remarked, "We have no common senate."

Doctor Willard Parker, being called upon, and during his remarks, "suggested that the profession in this city organize with a code of ethics, to regulate the *professional conduct* of its members. We had a precedent for such a movement in the legal profession; and said that among the lawyers, if a member violates their code of ethics, he was *thrown over the Bar*."

The second record, showing the results of expressions made at the dinner, may be found in the *Annalist* (vol. 1, 165), in which there is an account of a meeting held December 12, 1846, in the Lyceum of Natural History, No. 561 Broadway, in response to a call in the secular papers, signed by Doctors Valentine Mott, Alexander H. Stevens, and Isaac Wood. So far as I can learn, there is no record to show at what meeting, or by whom, these gentlemen were authorized to call that meeting. Tradition and living testimony, however, supplies

the historical deficiency, and is as follows : During the festivities of the evening of November 18, 1846, the subject of the want of a medical society to promote the harmony and usefulness of the profession, was freely discussed by several members in different parts of the assembly. At a late hour of the evening, and after the president of the society, Doctor Delafield, had retired with a major part of the members, about forty remaining, an impromptu meeting was organized, Doctor Stevens presiding. After a full discussion, and a free interchange of opinions upon the propriety of organizing a local voluntary medical society, in order to test the sense of those present, Doctor William Rockwell moved that a committee be appointed, consisting of the presiding officers of the three leading medical institutions of this city—at that time, The College of Physicians and Surgeons, The Medical Department of the University of New York, and The Medical Society of the County of New York, who were respectively: first, Alexander H. Stevens; second, Valentine Mott; and third, Isaac Wood—with authority to call a general meeting of the profession, which resolution was adopted. In conformity with the instructions given by this resolution, these gentlemen issued the call for this meeting, which was held in the Lyceum, December 12, 1846. This was the first action, out of which arose the future organization.

At this meeting (December 12), Doctor John Stearns was called to preside, and F. Campbell Stewart appointed Secretary. Doctor Mott, in a

neat, earnest, and eloquent address, stated the object and purpose of the meeting, which, from the tenor of his remarks, was to promote that harmony and good will in the profession which was so essential to its advancement in medical science and its beneficent application to humanity. Also, for the elevation of professional character, and that honorable position to which it was so eminently entitled.\* "Any swerving from the path of professional rectitude must be excluded." He was followed by Doctor Stevens, in a like train of thought, who "moved the reading of certain resolutions," which were read and discussed separately, and are as follows:

1. "*Resolved*, That it is expedient to organize an Academy of Medicine in this city, which shall represent, if not embrace, the great mass of regular practitioners residing here.

2. "*Resolved*, That it is expedient to procure a building to be devoted to the Academy of Medicine, and that shall also be known as a hall, in which the regular members of the profession may meet on common ground.

3. "*Resolved*, That a subscription be now commenced for this purpose.

4. "*Resolved*, That a committee of eleven be now appointed to prepare a constitution and by-laws.

"The third resolution being involved in the former, it was passed over for the present."

The others were then adopted.

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\* I do not pretend to give the exact words of the speakers, but the spirit, except where designated by quotations.

So much for the initiatory movement towards a noble voluntary medical association: "The New York Academy of Medicine," in which the talent and influence of the medical profession of this city are brought out in behalf of science and humanity. It was a glorious triumph and an important era in the history and character of the medical body of this city. And I believe it is destined still to accomplish great results, in promoting a fraternal regard in our ranks, as well as the furtherance of medical science, with all its accompanying blessings.

I have now, in a very brief manner, presented all that I have been able to learn from printed records and living testimony still accessible. This latter is the only source which gives the facts of the appointment of the committee who were empowered to call the meeting of December 12, 1846. Your minutes commence with the second meeting, which was held January 8, 1847.

It may be asked, with great pertinence, Have the object and purpose contemplated in the organization of the Academy been obtained? Upon this point there may be some difference of opinion. As for myself, after much personal observation and experience, I believe much, very much, has been accomplished, and upon a careful review, can be shown to the satisfaction of every one.

To the honor of the profession, it is evident that there is more general harmony and sociability prevailing, and to a much greater extent, than ever before.

Look at the roll of Fellows; it unquestionably



represents the body of the talent and influence of the profession in our city. I need not individualize or name them.

Observe the regularity of our meetings, the number of members present, the topics introduced, and the interesting discussions. Examine the papers and discussions\* to be found in the first and second volumes, and a part of the third, published in the Society's bulletin; also, the first and second volumes, and a part of the third, of the Society's Transactions, in which there is much that is eminently scientific and peculiarly practical.

If we have not accomplished all that could have been desired, it may be that those who feel the most disappointed have not rendered their full quota; for if all had done what they could, there would be no reason to feel that the effort had not been a success.

Yet it cannot be denied that we should have done more. The same may be said of any other society. We shall, nevertheless, compare favorably with the most active medical societies of the country.

Examine our list of exchanges, on which we have some of the first medical and scientific societies of the world: "The Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society of London," "The Imperial Academy of Medicine of Paris," The College of Physicians of Philadelphia, The Smithsonian Institute at Washington, &c.

The increased devotion to the higher and more scientific investigations, particularly in the diseases

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\* See addenda.

of the heart and lungs; the study of the nervous systems and their complications in diseases; the obstetrical department of medicine; the genito-urinary organs, and their diseases; the eye and ear; the study of physiology and pathology; the highly-interesting results of microscopical studies,\* and the collateral branches of the science, such as chemistry, hygiene, &c., &c.

The works published by some of our Fellows it does not become me at this time and place to particularize. They are many and of acknowledged ability.

I regret to say, however, that there has not been rendered heretofore that efficient patronage and support, either financial or literary, to the medical journals of our city, which the best interest of our profession requires. But I have reason to believe that at present these deficiencies no longer exist.

It is no more asked, "Who reads an American book?" The high rank of our medical literature is eloquently expressed in the frequent republications, not only at home, but abroad, and in foreign languages, of works emanating from *our* Fellows.

It is also particularly gratifying to learn how frequently the papers read before the Academy, as well as the discussions, have been referred to and translated in foreign journals, &c.

It is said by some of the most distinguished medical gentlemen of Europe, that the time has come when students will have to come to this country

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\* By C. E. Isaacs, J. C. Dalton and others, Transactions, vols. 1, 2 and 3; also, R. Cresson Stiles on Cattle Disease. Report of Board of Health.



to pursue and finish their studies, not merely on account of the greater abundance of means and facilities, but also on account of the rapidly increasing ability and acquirements of the profession here. We will accept these remarks as passing compliments; but there is frequently much truth delicately expressed even in compliments.

We have very recently listened to statements before the Academy by gentlemen just returned from Europe, after an absence of from four months to as many years, which were in the highest degree complimentary, giving the results of their observations abroad, based on interviews with foreign medical gentlemen in most of the distinguished cities, and conveying to us, through our medical brethren and fellows, expressions highly gratifying to the medical profession of the United States, and that too with special reference to those of our own city; acknowledging them their equals not only, but in some respects in advance, especially in surgery, and the obstetric art, the use of anæsthetics, and in the practical application of professional and scientific knowledge with which the New York Academy of Medicine has reason to be satisfied. This is gratifying, and, instead of causing us to rest, should stimulate us to redoubled energy, to still higher attainments.

And now, gentlemen, what is next most needed is that which was with so much earnestness urged and advocated in the incipient stages (December 12, 1846) of the organization of this Academy; I mean, the object set forth in the second resolution

passed by the meeting referred to, and second in importance only to the first, which is as follows :

“*Resolved*, That it is expedient to procure a building to be devoted to the Academy of Medicine, and that shall also be known as a hall in which the regular members of the profession may meet on common ground.”

And now let us hear the first breathing note of desire on this important matter—the indispensable necessity of a hall for the Academy and a headquarters for the profession.

Doctor Alexander H. Stevens, in reply to the sentiment given by Dr. Mott, in his concluding remarks expressed the hope “that the increasing unanimity of the corps would lead soon to the establishment of a medical hall unconnected with hospitals or colleges which would contain meeting-rooms, a library, and be a headquarters of resort both for ourselves and our brethren from abroad.” Doctor John Watson, on the same evening, in answer to the fifth toast, said, “that the imperfect action of the medical body depended upon the want of a proper place of meeting. If the medical profession would all set to work, we should soon have an ornamental and useful one. He hoped the time would soon come when the medical clubs would come together; if so, the profession would be organized, and we should be subject to no reproach from strangers.” Such were the sentiments which found utterance during the initial stage of the formation of this Academy.



Already, the profession of our neighboring city, Philadelphia, has a home, a medical library, commensurate with its wants and position in the community; and shall the City of New York any longer suffer from the want of this necessary appendage? It is for you to answer.

The position which this city occupies, in a national point of view, as being the largest in the New World; the great centre of finance and commerce in this country, gives it a very material influence on foreign countries, as well as our own, in all the departments of life.

Our whole country looks to this city for a professional status that shall be acknowledged throughout the land.

We have, in this city, three medical colleges, and the following hospitals: The New York, Bellevue, St. Luke's, St. Vincent's, Mount Sinai, and the German: The Roosevelt, with upwards of a million capital, and the Lenox, now in process of organization, &c., both of which will rank first in this country, with all the modern appliances and hygienic improvements: The Women's Hospital, the first and largest of its kind in the world: eye and ear infirmaries, dispensaries, asylums, &c., all of which are attended by the medical profession, with a mere fractional exception, GRATUITOUSLY.

The facilities afforded by our foreign commerce give us many advantages for clinical instruction, in every variety of disease.

The two great desiderata which give efficiency and permanency to the advancement of medical science,

are : first, an organization ; secondly, a home. As to the first, we have, in the Academy, all that can be desired—a State charter, with full and ample powers. Our roll of Fellows comprises the talent and influence (with but few exceptions) of the city and its surroundings—an active and harmonious body.

To secure the second great necessity, a home, it is essential that there should be a more concentrated *esprit de corps*, that shall develop the irresistible power of union.

This principle was displayed during the late rebellion, by the military, but especially when the Government showed its wisdom in the concentration of its forces, by which victory was soon achieved, and the supremacy of the nation maintained.

Let us, then, combine, and *all* with one accord respond to the duty devolved upon us, and this object will be accomplished. We can do it; we have the means, and let us do it, and that right speedily. Let no Fellow endeavor to evade his duty. Let every member of the profession feel it his privilege, as well as his duty, to meet the obligation he owes to himself, to his profession, and to society; for we are to be not only the subduers of disease, but the conservators of health.

No member can ignore the responsibility resting upon him, without proving recreant to himself and the trust imposed upon him, nor will he go unscathed in medical history.

I hope and trust that the roll of our Fellows will not be marred by a blank opposite a single name.

However humble, we can all be worked up in our appropriate place in the grand structure of a noble institution, as "polished stones, with our names written upon them;" for every stone has its relative bearing, from the ponderous foundation, or the merest fragment of the filling-up, to the topmost stone of the edifice. Let us remember "the widow's mite," as well as properly appreciate the rich man's munificence. Let *us*, then, rise *en masse*, with a determined spirit to obtain that indispensable professional necessity, a "Home."

The venerable first president of the American Medical Association, Doctor Nathaniel Chapman, on taking the chair, made the following declarations: "He loved his profession, and should be ungrateful if he did not. Whatever he possessed in this life had been bestowed by its *favours*; when he forgot it, or deserted it and its disciples," he remarked, with emphasis, "may Almighty God forget and desert me." \*

Let, then, no Fellow think that he can stand alone, or that his position is independent of his professional surroundings. No man can either be promoted or dishonored without its direct or reflex influence upon his neighbor. "For none of us liveth to himself; and no man dieth to himself."

Let *all* of *us*, then, and especially those of our number who have been blessed with rank and position, however deservedly obtained, recognize that they are pre-eminently indebted to their compeers. This should lead to a duty of gratitude to the pro-

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\* Transactions American Medical Association, vol. 1, 1847.



fession, not only in communicating freely the results of the observations and experience, which their position and opportunities have furnished them with, but also in the facilities for scientific improvement, in the kindly bestowment of equivalent reciprocities. Let not the sin of ingratitude to the profession be written against any one of us. "To whom much hath been given of him much shall be required."

The following picture, drawn by an old English Divine, \* though strong, is yet true: "Friendship consists properly in mutual offices, and a generous strife in alternate acts of kindness. He who does a kind act to an ungrateful person sets his seal against a flint. The only voice of ingratitude is give, give; but when once the gift is received, then, like the swine at his trough, it is silent and insatiable. In a word, the ungrateful person is a monster which is all throat and belly, a kind of thoroughfare, or common sewer, for the good things of this world to pass into. The ungrateful person is the only thing in this world for which nobody is the better. He lives to himself, and subsists by the good nature of others, of which he has not the least grain. He is an encroachment upon society, consequently should be thrust out of the world as a pest and a prodigy, and a creature not of God's making, but of the d—l's."

We have, as before stated, associated in the Academy, the power and influence of the medical

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\* South. It is not designed to limit this quotation to the Medical Profession, but to make its truths bear at some future period upon the public.

profession in this city. We number nearly three hundred living Fellows, besides, on our roll of the departed, names of some of the most distinguished men of any country, who have gone to "give an account of their stewardship." But, gentlemen, we have reason to rejoice that we still have so many among us of high scientific and professional attainments, with the many bright sons of the profession coming into notice, and promising much for the future.

The great duty now resting upon us is, that we secure a site, and erect a building thereon, that shall not only be an ornament to the city, but an honor to the Academy and the profession—a hall for our meetings, a place of resort, and rooms for social intercourse, a library, and a museum. A great medical centre that shall be both attractive and scientific.

I rejoice that the Academy has taken action in the right direction, by appointing a committee, consisting of Doctors Willard Parker, S. T. Hubbard, Jared Linsly, Ernest Krackowizer, and S. S. Purple, to which Doctors Anderson, S. Smith, and C. L. Mitchell were subsequently added, with full powers to procure a house or habitation in which the profession may meet on common ground, free from all local or individual institutions or influences, where our friends and professional brethren from abroad may be welcomed to pass their time in social intercourse, and for scientific investigations.

We want a building of sufficient capacity:

*First*—To furnish accommodations for the meet-



ings of the Academy, a council chamber and rooms in which medical societies, associations, clubs, &c., may be accommodated; where scientific and professional lectures may be delivered by our enterprising young men, free from embarrassing influences—all of which will tend to promote harmony and elevate the medical character. The rapid increase of medical students in our colleges and infirmaries demand it of the profession and the city.

*Second*—For a Library, with reading-rooms and the necessary conveniences and appliances attached, where I believe one of the largest and most valuable Libraries can early be gathered, superior to any in this country. I think I know of sufficient resources at this time, in books promised, so soon as proper accommodations can be provided, to amount to several thousand volumes. Two Fellows of the Academy have tendered their libraries, which cannot be excelled in this country for both rare and valuable works, especially of American production and interest; besides several who have promised to contribute liberally from their libraries. We need, also, conveniences where memorials, busts, portraits, and paintings of professional interest may be deposited with safety.

*Third*—A Museum of Normal and Pathological Anatomy and Specimens of Natural History, where the many valuable preparations which now are, or hereafter may be, in the city, may be deposited and preserved.\*

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\* For this purpose we shall need three lots: and a three-story fireproof building.

The profession have cause for perpetual regret at the loss of the Mott Museum, which was the labor and pride of more than half a century.

And now, gentlemen, permit me to call your attention for a moment to another point of great interest accomplished by the New York Academy of Medicine.

One of the objects of the Academy being the promotion of public health, and through it the encouragement of better morals and the interests of humanity in general; the saving of individual as well as public expenses, and especially the lowering of the death-rate to its minimum, it is with pleasure that I can refer your minds to the gratifying results of the disinterested efforts of the Academy in the primary movements for the organization, by the Legislature, of the "Metropolitan Board of Health"—the child of the Academy, brought forth by the continued efforts of the Academy and its Fellows during several years of protracted labor, with final triumph, by the aid of the Citizens' Association, effectually seconded by the prevailing fears of the approaching pestilence knocking at the doors of the city

This should excite us to greater diligence, and the whole city to a sense of thankfulness and acts of gratitude. The whole country is affected by this institution, and is in correspondence with the Board for sanitary information, besides an extensive foreign correspondence, and interchange of opinions, &c., &c

In what respect was the city at the last invasion of cholera, either in a hygienic condition or in the legal guardianship of public health, in a situation to afford us the slightest hope of escape? History is but too recent to permit us to be in ignorance of our danger.

Who will dare to entertain a doubt, for a moment, that our city was preserved from that "direful scourge," "the epidemic cholera," through the agency and energy of the Board of Health—by the scientific application of medical knowledge. The time was short, only a few months, which the Board had to place the city in a position to confer upon us any immunity against the ravages of that most dreaded "pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that wasteth at noonday."

In the outside cleansing, the Board did all that lay in their power. But to the efficient activity of her medical staff is the city indebted for her safety, who were ever on the alert, by day and by night, to "stamp out" the first appearance, in any case, of disease, by that most effectual plan, "the house to house visitation," which was so ably presented the Academy through the Committee on Public Health, by Dr. S. Smith, one of its members.

If I am rightly informed, there was scarcely an instance in which the cholera extended beyond the house in which it made its appearance.

This "house to house visitation" was not limited to the prompt use of medical treatment, but extended also to the thorough application of scientific hygienic means.



It is now an established fact that the science of medicine has illustrated by her investigations and observations, both in this country and abroad, on the rise and progress of cholera, that it should be classed with preventable diseases.

In a moral and commercial point, who can estimate or compute the disaster of a generally deranged and depressed condition of the business of this city at a time of its greatest prosperity, and when all was in high activity?

Let us look back to some of the earlier visitations of cholera, in 1832-34, &c., when, not only in the city, but everywhere, almost the entire business was suspended, our streets deserted, the people having fled to the country, and hundreds daily carried to the dark tomb, and panic was written on every countenance, and several M. D.'s absconded from the battle-ground.

Superior Court Chambers, September 18, 1866 (Stewart v. Schultz, President Board of Health), Chief Judge Daly remarked, "In regard to the Health Law, however, it is only justice to mention the pleasing fact, that had it not been in existence, *ten thousand* persons who are now alive would have died from cholera alone in this city."

In August, 1832, I left my house, St. John's Square, just after three o'clock, passed down Greenwich street, the great thoroughfare of the west side, to the Battery; from thence up the east side, through Pearl street to Fulton street—a distance of not less than from two and a half to three miles. The only persons I met were some gentlemen, between Murray

and Barclay streets, playing football in the middle of the street; then again at the Battery steamboat-landing, west side; and a few in the neighborhood of Fulton street; stores and banks all closed. I remember it well. It is no exaggeration. I tell you, gentlemen, it is the medical profession (under God, for He works by means,) to whom the city is indebted for her preservation from the last threatened epidemic of "cholera," and the protection of her commercial interests, as well as the preservation of many thousand lives, and the prevention of an immense orphanism.

I refer with pleasure to the first eight numbers of the Bulletin (vol. 3), as containing a most valuable contribution to what is known of cholera, its rise, progress, treatment, and prevention. Now, gentlemen, what we want most of all is union! union! union! and with its irresistible power concentrated into action, all our most sanguine wishes will be realized, God willing; "For except the Lord build the house they labor in vain that build;" "In union is strength;" "United we stand, divided we fall."

Let, then, every Fellow labor in love, so that the structure of the Academy may be of such grand materials and proportions that it will command respect and admiration, and be "The New York Academy of Medicine" in spirit and in truth.

I must now, in the name of the Academy, present my acknowledgments to those Fellows who have so readily and ably contributed to the edification of the members, and who have given that position to the

Academy which it now possesses. My prayer is, that it may continue to rise in dignity and scientific proficiency, until it shall be said, "thus far and no farther," when all is attained that it is permitted for man here to know; for, after all, we are fearfully and wonderfully made, and who can find out even our physical nature unto perfection except Him who created it?

Gentlemen, I tender you my sincere thanks for the uniform kindness and consideration which you have manifested toward me, not only in our social intercourse, but especially in the official position to which your suffrages have repeatedly called me, as presiding officer. I shall ever cherish it as a grateful remembrance that your appreciation has replaced me for a second and a third time in the Chair of the Academy. It is with kindred feelings that I refer to the harmony and good will which have generally marked our proceedings.

For myself, I have done what I could, and spared no labor to keep up an active and continuous interest in the association. I now commit to my successor the trust imposed upon me during the six years of my service, feeling that he will successfully watch over your interest; and trust that you will, in turn, render him that aid by which alone he can be able to serve, acceptably and with profit, "The New York Academy of Medicine."



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